



DODGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Dale J Schmidt Sheriff Scott Mittelstadt Chief Deputy

What to do about Scammers.

At least weekly citizens reach out to me to tell me about a scam phone call that they received. Believe me, I am well versed on the scams going on out there. Unfortunately, there is very little that can be done on a local level as scammers are very difficult to track down. Most times they are out of state or even out of the country. My advice to those who call is to simply hang up the phone and carry on with your day. In fact, you can go one step farther and block the number on your smart phone so they can't call you from that number again in the future. That has been a tactic I have taken and it has significantly cut down on the amount of phone calls I receive.

If you want to take it one step further, you can report scams by going to the website <https://www.usa.gov/stop-scams-frauds>. This page not only gives information on where to report the scams, but what scams are out there. This can be very helpful if you get a suspected scammer calling you and you just want to do some research on your own to find out if it is a scam.

There are many different types of scams out there and we do our best to fill you in what scams are out there. A simple rule of thumb to follow is if someone is calling you and is asking for you to pay money, it is most likely a scam. Government agencies will not call you and ask you to pay a fee over the phone. No legitimate company will ever ask you to go to the store and buy an iTunes card or a prepaid debit card and give the number over the phone. They won't ask you to go to the bank to take out large amounts of cash and ask you to mail the cash out. Law enforcement associations (sheriff's associations and trooper associations) will not call you to ask for donations.

These scammers will most often be forceful and will resort to threats if you don't cooperate with them. I have had scammers call me and tell me that my computer has had viruses that only they could fix, a warrant has been issued for my arrest and local law enforcement was going to come arrest me (that one always makes me laugh), and I have a loved one who needs cash to get out of jail. None of these are real but if they get you to believe what they are saying, it can cost you hundreds or thousands of dollars that you will never see again.

So when should you report these scams to local law enforcement. Any time your identity has been stolen or if you have fallen victim to one of the scammers and have paid them money. We want to know about those and we will do everything we can to track the money. The chances of recovering the money may be slim but we want to give it our best effort and we will work with law enforcement across the country to try to resolve cases that we are able.

If you have not fallen victim to the scam then simply refer to the website I referenced earlier. They have agents who work on fighting cyber scams on a daily basis and would be happy to hear from you regarding your experience.

Being scammed can be embarrassing and expensive. By simply hanging up the phone, you can prevent yourself from being a victim. Just a few friendly tips as we all work to make Dodge County a great place to live, work and visit.

Dale J. Schmidt
Dodge County Sheriff